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11. (New) An operation and display section of an operation unit for an image forming apparatus comprising:

- a touch screen panel substantially centered on the operation unit;
- numeral keys and an enter key located at a right-hand side of the touch screen panel;
- a clear/stop key located to a right-hand side of the numeral keys and the enter key;
- a start key located to a right-hand side of the clear/stop key and having a larger diameter than the numeral keys;
- a program key, a reset/preheat key, and an interrupt key located above the numeral keys and the enter key;
- a trial copy key located beneath the interrupt key and on the right-hand side of the numeral keys and the enter key;
- a set/counter key located to a top left-hand side of the touch screen panel; and
- a copy key, a copy server key, and a printer key located below the set/counter key and located to a left-hand side of the touch screen panel.

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12. (New) A method of operating an operation and display section of an operation unit for an image forming apparatus comprising the steps of:

- displaying an operation status message area on a touch panel display;
- displaying a document counting area configured to show a number of sheets set and a number of documents produced on the touch panel display;
- displaying an input document handling area on the touch panel display;
- allowing selection of at least one kind of document for image forming from the input document handling area;
- displaying an output document handling area on the touch panel display;

allowing selection of at least one of a sort mode, a stack mode, a staple mode, and a punch mode from the output document handling area;

displaying at least one image forming function tab;

allowing selection of a program key to register at least one image forming function tab;

displaying a programmable registered image forming function tab area;

allowing selection of at least one registered image forming function tab; and

wherein at least the input document handling area, the operation status message area, the document counting area, the output document handling area, and the programmable registered image forming function tab area are maintained on the touch panel screen.

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13. (New) The method of Claim 12, wherein the step of displaying an image forming function tab displays at most ten image forming function tabs.

14. (New) A method of operating an operation and display section of an operation unit for an image forming apparatus comprising the steps of:

displaying an operation status message area on a touch panel display;

displaying a document counting area configured to show a number of sheets set and a number of documents produced on the touch panel display;

displaying an input document handling area on the touch panel display;

allowing selection of at least one kind of input document for image forming;

displaying an output document handling area on the touch panel display;

allowing selection of at least one of a sort mode, a stack mode, a staple mode, and a punch mode from the output document handling area;

displaying at least one image forming function tab;

allowing selection of a program key to register at least one image forming function tab;

displaying a programmable registered image forming function tab area;

allowing selection of an automatic paper selecting function;

allowing operation in a limited display mode; and

wherein at least the input document handling area, the operation status message area, the document counting area, the output document handling area, and the programmable registered image forming function tab area are maintained on the touch panel screen.

15. (New) The method of Claim 14, wherein the step of displaying an image forming function tab displays at most ten image forming function tabs.

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16. (New) An operation and display section of an operation unit for an image forming apparatus, the operation and display section having a touch screen panel substantially centered on the operation unit, wherein the touch screen panel is further divided into three subsections, said subsections comprising:

a first touch screen panel subsection configured to control input processing of a document;

a second touch screen panel subsection configured to control copy processing of the document; and

a third touch screen panel subsection configured to control output processing of the document;

wherein each touch screen panel subsection includes function keys that are selected to control processing in each subsection and only information displayed in touch screen panel subsections that contain selected function keys changes when function keys are selected.

17. (New) The operation and display section according to Claim 16, wherein the first touch screen panel subsection includes input display keys configured to set document reading conditions.

18. (New) The operation and display section according to Claim 16, wherein the third touch screen panel subsection includes output display keys configured to select at least one of a sort mode, a stack mode, a staple mode, and a punch mode.

19. (New) The operation and display section according to Claim 16, wherein the first, second, and third touch screen panel subsections are horizontally arranged side by side on the touch screen panel in first, second, and third touch screen panel order.

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20. (New) The operation and display section according to Claim 16, wherein the second touch screen panel subsection has a greater area than each of the first and third touch screen panel subsections.

21. (New) An operation and display section of an operation unit for an image forming apparatus, the operation and display section having a touch screen panel substantially centered on the operation unit, wherein the touch screen panel is further divided into three subsections, said subsections comprising:

means for controlling input processing of a document;

means for controlling copy processing of the document; and

means for controlling output processing of the document;

wherein each touch screen panel subsection means includes function keys that are selected to control processing in each subsection and only information displayed in touch screen panel subsection means that contain selected function keys changes when function keys are selected.